REMARKS

This Response is in reply to the Office Action dated March 29, 2002. Applicant has amended claims 1, 13 and 17 as recommended, in response to the objection noted for these claims. Claims 1-2, 4-6, 10, 12-18 and 20-22 have been amended. For the reasons more fully outlined below and in the original specification, Applicant respectfully submits that pending claims 1-22 are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 13-15 and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,245,532 to *Mourier*. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections and, for the reasons set forth below, submit that the claims are patentably distinguished from the cited reference.

Mourier does not disclose the limitations recited in <u>amended</u> independent claims 1, 13 and 17. *Mourier* teaches a tag to identify and manage e-mail to be answered by a specific target date. The tag is assigned to selected unanswered messages only. The tag is deleted from an e-mail message after the message tag's target date (mail processing) has been completed.

Claims 2-4, 14-15 and 18-20 depend from patentable claims 1, 13 and 17 and recite additional features further distinguishing these claims from the cited reference. For at least these reasons, dependent claims 2-4, 14-15 and 18-20 are further believed to be patentable over the cited reference.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5-12, 16 and 21-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mourier* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,786,817 to *Sakano et al.* Applicant respectfully

traverses these rejections and, for the reasons set forth below, submit that the claims are patentably distinguished from the cited references.

Neither *Mourier* or *Sakano*, or the references in combination, make obvious the limitations recited in the amended claims. The *Mourier* reference is discussed above. *Sakano* teaches a method to identify e-mail that has not been delivered to the appropriate recipient (address). The system generates a candidate list of a plurality of candidates, the candidates selected according to an identification in the status message, prepares a search list of object identifiers (OID), eliminates the non-matching candidates, and selects a matching candidate in order to send the message to the correct recipient.

Accordingly, the cited art, either alone or in combination, do not teach or suggest Applicant's invention as claimed. Accordingly, withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

While additional features of the claims further distinguish the claims from the cited references, a detailed discussion of these differences is believed to be unnecessary at this time in view of the basic differences pointed out above. In view of the amendments made and comments above, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-22 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration, reexamination and prompt allowance of these claim are respectfully requested. The Applicant submits that no new matter has been added to the applicant by the present amendments and requests that the Examiner telephone the undersigned in the event a telephone discussion would be helpful in advancing the prosecution of the present application.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned **"VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES."**

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Respectfully submitted,

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</div>

Date _Sept. 30, 2002_   _William F. McIntyre, Jr._

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please make the following changes to claims 1-2, 4-6, 10, 12-18 and 20-22.

1.   [Third Amendment] In a distributed computing environment, a method for managing an electronic record [in a distributed computing environment,] for compliance with a retention policy of an organization, the method comprising the steps of:

creating an electronic tag that uniquely identifies [an] the electronic [records] record, the tag having at least one field for characterizing the record;

storing the at least one electronic tag in a central repository; [and]

sending [distributing] the electronic record [after it is identified by the electronic tag] to a recipient; and

wherein:

at least one of the steps of creating and storing ensure maintenance of the characterized record for a minimum time period based on the retention policy; and

the recipient will be unable to delete the record from the central depository prior to the end of the minimum time period.

2.   [Once Amended] The method of clam 1, further comprising the step of purging the electronic record comprising the steps of deleting the electronic record and selectively deleting the at least one electronic tag.

4.   [Once Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein the [distributing] sending step further comprises the step of selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.

5.   [Once Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein the distributed computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the creating step comprises the steps of:

analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;

analyzing a network user's user profile; [and]

generating a reference code[,] ; and

9

wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in <u>at least one of</u> the network user's workstation [specification], the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

6.   [Once Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein the creating step further comprises the steps of:

reading <u>the</u> stored electronic tags; and

generating [an] <u>a further</u> electronic tag in response to accessing an electronic record.

10.   [Once Amended] The method of claim 8, wherein the index code identifies the contents of [an] <u>the</u> electronic record and the sender or recipient of ht electronic record.

12.   [Once Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein the [distributing] <u>sending</u> step comprises the steps of:

reading the electronic tag; and

generating a new electronic tag based on the electronic tag, wherein the generating step comprises the steps of reading a network user's workstation specifications, reading a network user's user profile, and generating a reference code.

13.   [Third Amendment] <u>In a distributed computing environment,</u> an apparatus for managing <u>an</u> electronic [records on a in a distributed computing environment] <u>record for compliance with a retention policy of an organization</u>, the apparatus comprising:

a computer system comprising at least one processor and at least one memory, the computer system being adapted and arranged for:

creating an electronic tag that uniquely identifies [an] <u>the</u> electronic [records] <u>record, the tag having at least one field for characterizing the record</u>;

storing the <u>at least one</u> electronic tag <u>in a central repository</u>; [and]

[distributing] <u>sending</u> the electronic record [after it is identified by the electronic tag] <u>to a</u> recipient; and

<u>wherein:</u>

at least one of the steps of creating and storing ensure maintenance of the characterized record for a minimum time period based on the retention policy; and

the recipient will be unable to delete the record from the central depository prior to the end of the minimum time period.

14. [Once Amended] The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the computer system is further adapted and arranged for purging the electronic record wherein the computer system deletes the electronic record and selectively deletes the at least one electronic tag.

15. [Once Amended] The [method] apparatus of claim 13, wherein the computer system is further adapted and arranged for selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.

16. [Once Amended] The [method] apparatus of claim 13, wherein the [distributing] distributed computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the computer system is configured and arranged for:

analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;

analyzing a network user's user profile; and

generating a reference code, wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in at least one of the network user's workstation [specification], the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

17. [Third Amendment] In a distributed computing environment, an article of manufacture for managing an electronic [records in a distributed computing environment] record for compliance with a retention policy of an organization, the article of manufacture compromising a computer-readable storage medium having a computer program embodied therein that causes the computer network to perform the steps of:

creating an electronic tag that [uniquely] identifies [an] the electronic [records] record, the tag having at least one field for characterizing the record;

storing the at least one electronic tag in a central repository; [and]

11

[distributing] <u>sending</u> the electronic record [after it is identified by the electronic tag] <u>to a recipient; and</u>

<u>wherein:</u>

<u>at least one of the steps of creating and storing ensure maintenance of the characterized record for a minimum time period based on the retention policy; and</u>

<u>the recipient will be unable to delete the record from the central depository prior to the end of the minimum time period.</u>

18.   [Once Amended] The article of claim 17, further comprising the step of purging the electronic record comprising the steps of deleting the electronic record and selectively deleting the <u>at least one</u> electronic tag.

20.   [Once Amended] The article of claim 17<u>,</u> wherein the [distributing] <u>sending</u> step further comprises the step of selectively determining whether the recipient may purge the electronic record.

21.   [Once Amended] The article of claim 17, wherein the distributed computing environment comprises computers having a registry and a user profile, wherein the creating step comprises the steps of:

analyzing a network user's workstation specifications;

analyzing a network user's user profile; and

generating a reference code, wherein the electronic tag is generated from information analyzed in the network user's workstation [specification], the network user's user profile, and the reference code.

22.   [Once Amended] The [method] <u>article</u> of claim 17, wherein the creating step further comprises the steps of:

reading <u>the</u> stored electronic tags; and

generating [an] <u>a further</u> electronic tag in response to accessing an electronic record.